



# What to do if someone dies abroad

When someone dies overseas, the stress of bereavement can be made worse by having to deal with an unfamiliar system far from home. However, you can get help from the British authorities.

Read this page to find out what to do and what help you can get if someone dies abroad.

## Someone you're travelling with dies abroad


If you're abroad when someone dies, you should contact the nearest British embassy, High Commission or consulate. They'll be able to give you advice on what to do. If you're on a package holiday you should tell your package organiser's representative in the resort as soon as you can. Some of the bigger tour operators have welfare teams who will be able to help you with arrangements.

[Find details of British embassies and consuls](#) 

## A close relative or friend dies abroad while you're in the UK

The **British consulate** in the country where the person has died should ask the UK police to inform the next-of-kin. If you're notified about the death by someone else, for example a tour operator, you should phone the **Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)** who'll be able to keep you informed and help with arrangements.

## Registering the death

All deaths must be registered in the country where the person died. The British Consul will be able to advise you on how to do this. In some countries you can then also register the death at the British Embassy, High Commission or Consulate which means you will get a UK-style death registration document. However, this system is being phased out and by mid-2015 you will need to register all deaths overseas with the Foreign and Commonwealth office in the UK. There is more information about [how to register a death abroad](#)  on GOV.UK. When registering the death in person, you should take information about yourself and the person who has died including:

- full name
- date of birth
- passport number
- where and when the passport was issued
- details of the next-of-kin, if you're not their closest relative.

## Funeral arrangements

You can either arrange to have the funeral overseas or for the body to be returned to the UK. This is known as repatriation. If you want the funeral to be held in the UK you will need to use international undertakers who can advise you about the arrangements. Before you can bring the body home, you'll need the following documents:

- a certified English translation of the foreign death certificate from the country in which the person died
- authorisation to remove the body from the country
- a certificate of embalming.

The British consulate or an international undertaker will be able to tell you how to get these documents.

When a body is returned to the UK, the **Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages** for the district where the funeral is to take place must be told and will need to issue a certificate before burial can take place. If a cremation is to take place the **Home**

**Office** also needs to give permission. You can get an application for a Home Office cremation order from your local crematorium.

## Funeral costs

Repatriation can be expensive so make sure you discuss the costs before confirming your arrangements. You'll need to be sure you can meet the costs or that they're covered by an insurance policy. The FCO will not pay burial, cremation or repatriation expenses. If you are claiming certain benefits and the funeral is taking place in another European country or Iceland, Liechtenstein or Norway you may be able to apply for a funeral payment from the Social Fund.

- [More information about funeral payments](#)  on GOV.UK

## Making a claim on your travel insurance



If the person who died had travel insurance, you may be able to claim the costs of the arrangements from this. You should contact the insurance company as soon as you can. If you are covered, the insurance company will usually employ a local **assistance firm** who will do things like arrange an international undertaker.




- [More information on making a claim on an insurance policy](#)  
([/consumer/insurance/insurance/insurance-claims/making-a-claim-on-your-insurance-policy/](https://www.gov.uk/consumer/insurance/insurance/insurance-claims/making-a-claim-on-your-insurance-policy/))

## Suspicious circumstances

If there is evidence that the death happened in suspicious circumstances, the British embassy will be able to give you advice about how to raise your concerns with the local authorities. They will also be able to advise you on how to get legal advice.

## Next steps

- You can contact the **Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)** about a death overseas 24 hours on 020 7008 1500.
- [Find details of local British embassies and consuls](#) 
- [Find details of local Irish embassies and consuls](#) 

- You can [find more information about cremation after a death abroad](#)  on GOV.UK
- More information about repatriating a body at [repatriationhelp.com](#) 
- [More information on deaths abroad in suspicious circumstances from the FCO](#) 
- [If you need more help](#) ([/consumer/get-more-help/if-you-need-more-help-about-a-consumer-issue/](#)).

## Other useful information

- [More information on death abroad from the FCO](#) 

---

### Did this advice help?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Copyright ©2002-2016 Citizens Advice. All rights reserved Registered charity no: 279057 Company no: 1436945 England